March 11, 1958

Dear Joyce:

Much thanks to you and Ralph-- I can always count on you for mines of information. I will look up the papers you mentioned as soon as I get back home (I'm on a brief trip to Philadelphia).

One point about methyl siliconate (before I even look it up). I had the impression that compounds of this type tended to pplymerize very readily: $R\,Si(OH)_3 \longrightarrow (O\text{-}SiR.OH.\text{--})_n$ giving products of rather high molecular weight. Could that have been true in your trial? Of course there is no particular reason to suppose that Si-C links are formed in frustule deposition, the esters of silicic acid being the most plausible intermediates, if any.

While we'reon the subject, have you ever set up any enrichments for other organisms that might use methyl siliconate for a carbon source, or more generally that might attack polysiloxanes $(-SiR_2\text{-}O\text{-})_n$ ? As these are coming into more and more general use industrially one would want to know if there is any hope of their wastes returning to the general circulation.

You asked about Medical Genetics. Thishasn't brought about any very drastic changes, though I have a little more to do with medical students. I still have a joint appointment in both departments (hence this stationery) and in every waythere is no real separation. Esther is still a project associate in Genetics; she could call herself Medical Genetics at a moment's notice.

For the time being, we are still ensconced in the Genetics Bldg. However, plans are being drawn (in fact bids are about to be let) for a new research wing at the medical school, and when this is completed, we will move into some rather handsome quarters.

Our research programs are pretty much along the samegeneral lines as they have been; I did do some work on antibody production by single lymphoid cells while I was in Melbourne, and I may have some more work along these lines under way here (when a Dr. Makela arrives in a coupleof monthsfor a postdoc. fellowship.)

As ever

Joshua Lederberg